

COMMENT ON PERRY: UNIFICATION THOUGHT  
AND A NEW BASIS FOR SOCIETY

by

**Ramon C. Reyes**  
Professor of Philosophy  
Ateneo de Manila University  
Quezon City, PHILIPPINES

DISCUSSION PAPER

on

Paul Perry's

UNIFICATION THOUGHT AND A NEW BASIS FOR SOCIETY

Comment and Critique on Professor Perry's paper.

Professor Perry's paper proposes to analyse the roots of the social problems which beset present American society and offers the Unification provided as a theoretical framework that could contribute toward the resolution of America's predicament and lead this nation to a post-individualistic age.

The United States of America started out some two hundred years ago with auspicious beginnings but today, "the most powerful and prolific nation of the world" is plagued with both economic and social ills. This is the root cause of which might be attributed to what Professor Perry calls a certain cultural idealism created by the advent of technology and the growth of industrial society. This is leading for a "new culture" and "new age" to be created.

Professor Perry traces the roots of American culture to the spirit and principles of "Utilitarian Liberalism", centered on the human individual and his search for happiness, on rationality, intellect, and logic, which of its nature is critical of traditional values of faith and commitment to "good" of change, progress, knowledge, freedom and human perfection.

There have been attempts such as that of John Rawls, Professor Perry says, to go beyond utilitarianism and seek for a more theoretical, more universal state of equality and rationality. However, the fundamental principle of society and thus of norms of justice and justice.

Rawls' principle of equality and equality of rights would still prove to be insufficient as the fundamental basis of a society, according to Professor Perry. Only a more fundamental principle, such as that of "Heart" and "Love" could provide the ultimate foundation. And here is where the possible contribution of the Unification thought framework presents itself.

Professor Perry introduces the Unification concept of "home-coming": "Home" signifies at the same time the proper relation of parents and children and the sphere of heart and love. "Home-coming" is a return to a state which would encompass both the traditional religious and political. It is the spiritual kingdom of God and the temporal realm of human society.

God, in Unification Thought, is a God of Heart and Love. He is a God who creates our world out of Heart and Love. In other words, Heart and Love become the basis of the Unification, into a Divine Logos.

Thus, our first ancestors as well as all of creation were to be the incarnation of the Divine Logos.

However, due to the Fall of Man, there was a deviation from this Divine Purpose. Instead of creation being the true incarnation of the Divine Logos, there is now a dual sovereignty, of good and evil, God and Satan over man and creation, as symbolized by the biblical figures of Cain and Abel. The resolution of the problem posed by the Fall can only be brought about by man, or Abel submitting himself once again to the sovereignty of God and Cain submitting to Abel, before man could again come "home" and be restored to his original nature as incarnation of the divine Logos, thus "the unity, of parents and children as being on God's Heart and Purpose".

The Cain/Abel figure provides for Professor Perry a social model for social reform and the establishment of a new culture. This, in a first stage, an individual or group constitutes itself as an Abel figure. This is followed by a division of man and a new social order of groups. This is followed by a struggle or interaction between Cain and Abel, viewed as the contrary, conservative individualism of Cain and the liberal, idealistic Abel to achieve harmony. Finally, the principles and ideals are formally established, as in a formal constitution or laws, thus restoring harmony and unity in the community.

Professor Perry sees America as calculating in its history, this social model based on "utilitarian thought, both on the national and the international level.

Religion, Professor Perry points out, has been a strong motivating force in the cultural foundation of the nation. He quotes Robert Bellah who says, "the obligation, both collective and individual, to carry out God's will on earth ... was the motivating spirit of those who founded America, and it has been present in a general sense." The first colonists were out to create a "new age" and a "promised land".

Subsequently, in the American Revolution, Professor Perry demonstrates those who formed the revolution, bearing a new spirit, a new ideal of society, could contribute the Abel figure. This is the original status quo. After a struggle, man had to submit to the principles of society represented by the Abel group. And finally, the Constitution was formally established, formalizing the liberal ideals underlying and establishing a new nation.

Furthermore, on the international level, a similar pattern is seen to exist. America, as "the most powerful democratic nation of the world", must set itself up as an Abel nation, leading other nations who hold ideals of human freedom and democracy. Consequently, America must defeat Cain as represented by the Soviet Union and its Communist ideology. Finally, there must be a stage of internationalization of common ideals and values, leading to the formation of "a

world come, a world culture, and the building of the Kingdom of God on earth."

This paper would seem to pose two sets of problems, those pertaining to interpretation of Unification Thought, and those concerning the realities and dynamics of society and culture.

Regarding the interpretation of Unification Thought, it does not seem to be necessary that the Cain/Abel figure be applied in such a manner that a certain given individual or nation is an Abel and another be a Cain. Would there not be more grounds for saying that, precisely because of the Fall, the Cain/Abel figure would be internal to every man and every human group, such that the struggle for salvation is not so much among individuals and among nations, but rather within every one of us, whether white, yellow or black, capitalist, communist, or socialist. Is it really in keeping with the whole spirit of Unification Thought, provided that it is of Mercy and Love, that one identifies particular individuals, groups and peoples as being as opposed to the other?

Furthermore, Professor Park would seem to hold that the diversity of cultures is one of the major consequences of the Fall, indicating that the path leading to salvation is that which leads toward the establishment of one world culture, which would then serve as the standard for the now existing cultures. Could it not also be argued that the present diversity of cultures is the manifestation of the richness and splendor and infinity of the divine image in so far as each culture represents in its highest levels the achievements of the human spirit, incarnation of the divine Mercy and Purpose? Granted that due to the Fall, the human spirit is not perfect, instead however of concluding from this that there should therefore be one single culture, could we not hold rather that, while respecting the uniqueness and richness of each culture, the proper religious task would be to seek to inspire, heal, and renew each culture from within with the spirit of Mercy, Love, and Divine Purpose?

There would seem to be all the more reason for the interpretation and application of Unification Thought to respect the diversity of cultures since, with the help of sociology and cultural anthropology, we have today become more aware that culture is not simply some kind of a superficial veneer that man could rub off of and on, that culture is some kind of a second nature to man, born of a common environment and a common history, shared by a given human community, and embodied in a proper language, art, music, system of thought, customs, cuisine. In this light, to speak of one world culture today, even if it could at best signify some kind of an esperanto-like contact language that really would have no efficacious meaning for anyone. At the worst, it could signify the cultural hegemony of one culture over others, which would be difficult to maintain in the face of present social and cultural consciousness of man.

It is true, there would seem to be no contradiction on the one

hand, in not forgetting the universality of human nature under the  
Fatherhood of one God, and on the other hand, respecting the  
uniqueness and specificity of the different existing cultures.  
Just as the God of Heart and Love approaches each human person in  
his unique self, and thus truly loves him or her, might we not  
also perhaps add that the same God of Heart and Love approaches  
each culture in its uniqueness and specificity?